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Investigation of Secondary School Students' Anxiety and Lesson Participation towards Visual Arts Lesson

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effects of secondary school students' anxiety towards the visual arts lesson and their participation in this lesson. In the study, students' levels of anxiety and participation in the visual arts lesson were examined together with variables such as gender, grade level and academic achievement. Secondary school students studying in Turkey and the sample of the research consisted of 286 students studying in secondary schools in Ankara, Konya and Mersin provinces. Anxiety Scale for Visual Arts Lesson and Visual Arts Class Participation Scale developed by the researcher were used as data collection tools. In addition, the demographic information of the students was obtained with the personal information form developed by the researcher. In the analysis of the data, descriptive analysis, independent groups t-test, F test and Regression Analysis techniques were used. According to the results obtained from the study, the secondary school students' anxiety levels for the visual arts lesson were found to be moderate and below, but their participation in the lesson was at a high level. In addition, it was determined that the anxiety towards the visual arts lesson predicted the participation in the lesson at a higher level, but affected it negatively. According to the grade level and achievement level of the students participating in the study, their participation in the visual arts lesson and their anxiety levels for the lesson differ. However, no significant difference was found in the dependent variables related to gender.

Introduction

With contemporary art education, children and youngsters who are educated by experiencing the multidimensional and dimensional phenomenon called art and art problems in all their forms, see and interpret events and phenomena in their versatility and dimensionality, making it easier to comprehend events and facts. It becomes open to innovations, all kinds of contemporary developments, new forms and shaping. It becomes easier for him to understand the social and cultural changes in his age. He has a tolerant and dynamic personality (Belluigi, 2009; Kibici, 2022; Parker, 2010; Richmond, 2009). Visual arts are products that emerge from the combination of an individual's imagination, thought, creativity and skills in line with the principles of artistic arrangement and design with a specific purpose or aesthetic concerns (MEB, 2018). The individual does not need to be gifted or an artist for these products to emerge. According to Twigg and Garvis (2010), art education given to individuals of all ages

and levels helps to reveal the manifestations of their mental images and emotions. While the concept of art education includes all fields of art in general, it covers the lessons given in the field of art in schools in a more specific sense (San, 2003).

Visual arts education in schools allows students to develop their characteristics such as creativity and aesthetics (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2007; Halverson & Sheridan, 2018; MEB, 2018), to enable individuals to discover their own talents (Anderson, 2003; Woywod & Deal, 2016), to personality development (Gençaydın, 1990) and social development (Kırıçoğlu, 2005). It is known in the literature that art education directly contributes to the development of an individual's creative thinking skills (Artut, 2013; San, 2004). Creativity is a primary skill that should be acquired by students as a requirement of lifelong learning in the 21st century, also known as information age (Piioro, 2011). This innate feature can be developed by arranging the necessary educational environment (Schmid, 2005). Visual arts lessons in schools have a special importance in the realization of this function. Visual arts lesson focuses on the study, analysis and discovery of the creative process, designing using traditional and contemporary materials in line with art elements and design principles, developing the language of visual art, investigating the meaning and value of art (MEB, 2013; Monson et al., 2020; Sünbül, 2000). In this direction, the visual arts lesson integrates the cognitive, affective and psychomotor characteristics of the individual together and provides the shaping of his feelings and thoughts (Duinen & Sherwood, 2019; Sawyer, 2018). According to San (2004), this lesson should be given to students in a planned way, starting at an early age, as it creates an awareness of art in students. At this point, it can be said that the secondary school level is a stage in which art education should be carefully considered. According to the cognitive approach, this stage is the transition period in students to abstract thinking (National Institutes of Health, 2015). Therefore, it is of great importance for the effectiveness of learning that students' perspectives and perceptions towards the lesson are positive, especially at this stage. In addition, negative attitudes towards art and fine arts, low anxiety and expectations also have negative effects on the learning outcomes of this lesson (Kara, 2021).

Anxiety is the primary affective factor that negatively affects students' academic performance in lessons. According to Sarıkaya (2021), anxiety prevents the individual from experiencing uneasiness and making the right decisions, especially in the school environment. Anxiety can also negatively affect the individual's feelings and thoughts in academic life. Anxiety is one of the factors that cause the individual to display maladaptive behaviors in the school environment. In line with the existing definitions, it can be found that the common denominator is that anxiety is a disturbing situation that negatively affects people. Anxiety that occurs in any situation where the integrity of the personality is threatened is known by the emotional reactions that people give widely. Often, reactions to negative emotions can cause anxiety. In a way, it is a feeling that is experienced very often in human life and constantly affects our lives (Kibici, 2021).

It has been observed that the number of studies on anxiety has increased in the last quarter century. It has been stated that anxiety is generally a state of emotion supported by negative situations such as fear and anxiety. The uncertainty and helplessness that the individual feels in the situation of danger is used to explain the feeling of anxiety. It is stated that anxiety has a complex structure and there is no clear definition. It has been observed that studies dealing with anxiety in the academic sense focus more on the concepts of test anxiety, science and

technology anxiety, mathematics and science anxiety (Ghazi-Saidi, 2020; Hembree, 1990; Unger & Meiran, 2020). However, it is seen that there are very limited studies on anxiety about visual arts lessons and activities (Hiçılmaz, İnam Karahan & Adanır, 2017; Hiçılmaz & Karip, 2020; Schiralli, 2002).

Visual arts lesson is one of the important areas that contribute to the spiritual, physical and mental development of individuals and that all individuals should benefit from. It is expected that each student will reach these targeted gains throughout the education process. Students reach these targeted gains through cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning (Kaleli, 2021; Sünbül, 2010). It is determined by measuring and evaluating whether the gains in the program have been realized or not. Perhaps the most difficult features to measure are anxiety and attitudes. Lessons such as art, philosophy, and literature are those in which the affective field predominates. In order to have a positive attitude in these lessons and to reduce their anxiety, the instructors should know very well how to address the affective field, express them and put them into practice and action. Since the visual arts lesson is a practical lesson, it is of great importance to observe and exhibit positive behaviors for positive student attitudes. Visual arts education is a lesson that is closer to the affective field created with different disciplines. If the teacher first knows this and tries to explain the affective field, he can go a long way (Aslantaş, 2014; Kara, 2020).

Visual arts education is a process that will help children at all educational levels to express their inner world, to socialize with group work, and to develop their motor skills in a healthier way. Different materials and methods used in visual arts activities affect the development of the child positively and increase his interest in the art lesson. The techniques and methods taught by working with different materials provide the opportunity for better self-expression and broad classification by closely connecting with the physical and characteristic features of the students (Brewer, 2000; Emeji, 2008; Krug & Cohen-Evron, 2000; Westraadt, 2007). Visual Arts, which is a part of general education, is one of the areas where individual education is most needed (Bachar & Glaubman, 2006). More precisely, the nature of this field requires individual training (Krug & Cohen-Evron, 2000). Therefore, active participation with a student-centered approach is essential in this lesson, even in our education system, where traditional education approaches are dominant.

For an effective learning, the learner should take responsibility for learning and participate actively in learning (Akdeniz et al., 2016; Christenson, Reschly & Wylie, 2012; Küçüktüglü, Sünbül & Bozoğlan, 2009). Participation in the lesson may be difficult and boring for some students, and easy and quite enjoyable for others (Skinner, Kindermann & Furrer, 2009; Wang, Bergin & Bergin, 2014). Teachers need to keep participation high for student success in the teaching process and to resort to solutions for this. In order for the teacher to ensure student participation, it is important to consider the student's prerequisite learning, to adapt the signs and explanations to the level of the student, and to give each student the opportunity to participate as much as he or she needs. In addition to all these, it has been observed that affective characteristics such as attitude, motivation and anxiety are important factors in students' participation in the lesson (Reeve, 2013; Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). Emotional behaviors are as important as cognitive behaviors for students to reach the learning outcomes of the lesson. It is known that students are more active in the lessons where they feel happy away from anxiety and pressure and they like these lessons more (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2009; Skinner, Kindermann & Furrer,

2009). Factors such as increasing classroom availability and higher demands and expectations from students in secondary schools may cause students to feel an uncertainty of fit between themselves and their environment (Bety-O'Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010 ; Eccles, 2004). Many students become more and more apathetic towards school and take action, leading to poor academic results and undesirable behavior in the classroom (Monson et al., 2020; Young et al. , 2012).

Although middle school art classes are uniquely structured and different from core classes, in many ways they can exacerbate students' problem behaviors common in middle schools (Jason & Kuchay, 2001; Susi, 1995). Much of the literature surrounding behavior management in arts classes dates back 20 to 30 years, however, these findings still seem relevant today. This type of study shows that art classes tend to be less restrictive, as they offer students a space to be creative and can negatively affect student behavior (Larochelle, 1999). Students generally see art class as a free (non-academic) time, so academic discipline problems may arise in class participation (Larochelle, 1999). As with secondary schools in general, art classes can be varied in content and contain a complex layout. This situation may cause affective negativities and problems in class participation in many students (Kuster, Bain, Newton, & Milbrandt, 2010). A less structured environment in visual arts classes may lead to an increase in examples of students behaving inappropriately and being indifferent to activities (Monson et al., 2020). It has been tried to identify, evaluate and reduce the visual arts anxiety. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought in the study:

- What is the level of secondary school students' anxiety and participation in the visual arts lesson?
- Do secondary school students' anxiety and participation in the visual arts lesson differ significantly according to the gender variable?
- Do secondary school students' anxiety and participation in the visual arts lesson differ significantly according to the class variable?
- Do secondary school students' anxiety and participation in the visual arts lesson differ significantly according to the academic achievement variable?
- Do secondary school students' concerns about the visual arts lesson affect their participation in this lesson at a significant level?

Method

In the study, the relationship between secondary school students' anxiety about visual arts lesson and their participation in the lesson was investigated. The method used is the relational research model, one of the quantitative research designs. This model serves to examine the existence of co-variation between two variables (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012; Küçüküktüğü, 2022). In this study, the relational research model was preferred, since the relationship between anxiety about the visual arts lesson and the level of participation in the lesson was examined. The variables of the study are the students' anxiety towards the visual arts lesson and the level of participation in the lesson, the dependent variables of the study are the academic achievement levels of the students themselves, and the class level and gender variables are the independent variables of the study.

The sample of the study consisted of students studying in secondary schools in Turkey. The study group of the research consists of 286 secondary school students studying in private and public secondary schools in Konya, Ankara and Mersin in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. It is seen that 38.11% (N=109) of the students were female and 81.89 (N=177) were male. When the distribution of the students according to their grade levels is examined, 24.13% (N=69) of the 5th grade students. It is understood that 6th grade students are 33.22% (N=95), 7th grade students are 30.42 (N= 87) and 8th grade students are 12.24% (N=35).

Anxiety Scale for Visual Arts Lesson

In order to measure secondary school students' anxiety about visual arts lesson, the scale developed by Hızırlmaz & Karip (2020) was used. The scale consists of 12 items in 5- point Likert type. The KMO value for the scale was .884 and the Bartlett Test of Sphericity $\chi^2 = 2096.752$; $p = 0.000$. As to the data obtained from the "Line chart and "Total Variance" table, it was seen that the scale has a two-factor structure. As a result of the analysis carried out using the "varimax" method, a scale consisting of 12 items and two sub-dimensions was obtained. The first dimension was named "Anxiety about the lesson" and the second dimension was named "Anxiety about the process". CFA was performed to determine the extent to which the determined construct was confirmed. As a result of CFA, the suitability of factor structures obtained from EFA was revealed. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the GSDK scale was found to be .810. It can be said that this rate is suitable for students at the secondary school level of the GSDK scale. In the internal consistency analyzes performed on this research data, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the anxiety scale for the visual arts lesson was calculated as .925. As a result, it was assumed that the GSDK scale had high reliability criteria for this study and that it could be used in a valid and reliable way to determine the anxiety levels of secondary school students towards the visual arts lesson.

Visual Arts Class Participation Scale

The Secondary School Students' Visual Arts Class Participation Scale was developed to measure this level students' participation in painting lessons and activities. While developing the lesson participation scale, the literature of the lesson was examined and the opinions of the art lesson teachers and academicians were consulted. In this context, expressions representing participation in visual arts lessons were included in the scale. In this way, the content validity of the Secondary School Visual Arts Class Participation Scale was tried to be ensured. A 5- point rating system was used in scoring the scale. If the student fully performed the relevant behavior or action related to k- factor breakthrough, he or she was given 5 points, and if he or she performed very little, 1 point was given. The lowest score a student can get for each item of the scale is 1 and the highest score is 5. During the validity period of the Secondary School Visual Arts Class Participation Scale, item analyzes were made and then the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated. The KMO value of the scale was .992 and the Bartlett Test of Sphericity $X^2 = 2682.38$; $p = 0.000$. In line with the data obtained from the line graph and the "Total Variance Explained" table, it was observed that the scale has a single factor structure. CFA was performed to determine the extent to which the determined construct was confirmed. CFA and EFA analyzes revealed that the factor structure obtained was in one dimension. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the Visual Arts Class Participation scale was calculated as .94. As a result, it is assumed that the scale of participation in the visual arts

lesson has high reliability criteria for this research and can be used in a valid and reliable way to determine the participation levels of secondary school students in the relevant lesson.

Data Analysis Techniques

In the study, data obtained from visual arts anxiety and lesson participation scales and descriptive and predictive statistics were applied. With descriptive statistics, it was examined whether the visual arts anxiety and class participation scores of secondary school students were normally distributed. In this direction, the visual arts anxiety and class participation levels of secondary school students were examined. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was first used to test the normality assumptions (Yurt, 2011). Test results indicated a normal distribution for visual arts anxiety and class participation ($p > .05$). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is simply not sufficient for normality assumptions. Since skewness and kurtosis values should be checked for this, these values should be looked at and normality assumptions should be decided.

In this study, a value in the range of ∓ 2 was determined for all measurements of kurtosis and skewness values related to visual arts anxiety and lesson participation scores. In addition, when the mean and median values of these two variables are examined, it has been determined that these values are very close to each other. These values indicate a normal distribution. In this context, Independent t-Test and F-test techniques from parametric statistics were used in the study. In the study, regression analysis was also performed for predictive statistics. With the regression analysis, the predictive effect of visual arts anxiety scores for visual arts class participation was examined.

Results

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation values of the visual arts anxiety scores of the secondary school students participating in the study. According to these findings, it was determined that the lesson anxiety mean score of the participants (*Mean* = 2.67) was at a moderate level, whereas the mean process anxiety score was at a low level (*Mean* = 2.67). The average of the visual arts lesson total anxiety scores of the secondary school students (*Mean* = 2.17) was calculated as moderate.

Table 1. Anxiety Scale Results for Visual Arts Lesson

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Visual Arts Anxiety	286	1.00	4.60	2.67	0.63
Visual Arts Process Anxiety	286	1.00	5.00	1.67	0.71
VA Total Anxiety	286	1.13	4.45	2.17	0.52

In Table 2, the average and standard deviation values of the participation scores of the secondary school students participating in the study in the visual arts lesson are shown. According to these findings, the average score of participants in the visual arts lesson (*Mean* = 3.47) is high.

Table 2 Visual Arts Class Attendance Test Results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Visual art lesson participation	286	1.00	5.00	3.47	0.86

Table 3 shows the results of the analysis regarding the anxiety levels of the participants according to their gender. When the independent t-test analyzes were analyzed, it was seen that there was no statistically significant difference in the lesson anxiety, process anxiety dimensions and visual arts lesson total anxiety scores ($p>0.05$).

Table 3. Comparison of Secondary School Students' Anxiety about Visual Arts Lesson According to Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Visual Arts Anxiety	Female	109	2.59	0.61	-1.542	0.124
	Male	177	2.71	0.65		
Visual Arts Process Anxiety	Female	109	1.64	0.62	-0.622	0.535
	Male	177	1.69	0.76		
VA Total Anxiety	Female	109	2.12	0.46	-1.354	0.177
	Male	177	2.20	0.56		

Table 4 shows the results of the analysis regarding the participation levels of the participants in the visual arts lesson according to their gender. When the independent t-test analyzes were analyzed, it was seen that there was no statistically significant difference in the participation scores of the secondary school students in the visual arts lesson ($p>0.05$).

Table 4. Comparison of Secondary School Students' Levels of Participation in Visual Arts Lesson by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Visual art lesson participation	Female	109	3.42	0.94	-0.701	0.484
	Male	177	3.50	0.81		

Table 5 shows the results of the F-test analysis regarding the anxiety levels of the participants for the visual arts lesson according to their grade levels. The following findings were obtained as a result of the F comparisons made on the two dimensions of the visual arts lesson anxiety scale and the overall total score averages according to the grade levels of the students. An F value of 1.63 in the fine arts lesson anxiety dimension; An F value of 2.65 was calculated in the process anxiety dimension and an F value of 2.68 in the mean total anxiety score. According to these F values obtained, a significant difference was found in the process anxiety and total score averages of the anxiety scale for the visual arts lesson in terms of grade level. According to the Sheffe test analysis, it was found that the students studying in the seventh and eighth grades had high levels of anxiety towards the visual arts lesson.

Table 6 shows the results of the F test analysis regarding the participation levels of the participants in the visual arts lesson according to their grade levels. The value of 7.07 was calculated as a result of the F comparisons made on the mean score of the visual arts lesson participation scale according to the grade levels of the students. According to this F value obtained, a significant difference was found in the mean scores of the visual arts lesson

participation scale in terms of grade level. In the Sheffe test analysis, it was found that students studying in the fifth and sixth grades had a significantly higher participation in the visual arts lesson compared to the participants in the upper grades.

Table 5. Comparison of Secondary School Students' Anxiety Levels for Visual Arts Lesson According to Grade Levels

	Class Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Visual Arts Anxiety	5	69	2.66	0.62	1.63	0.18
	6	95	2.57	0.56		
	7	87	2.71	0.68		
	8	35	2.83	0.71		
	Total	286	2.67	0.63		
Visual Arts Process Anxiety	5	69	1.52	0.50	2.65	0.05
	6	95	1.62	0.65		
	7	87	1.82	0.91		
	8	35	1.72	0.58		
	Total	286	1.67	0.71		
VA Total Anxiety	5	69	2.09	0.44	2.68	0.05
	6	95	2.10	0.46		
	7	87	2.27	0.62		
	8	35	2.27	0.53		
	Total	286	2.17	0.52		

Table 6. Comparison of Secondary School Students' Participation in Visual Arts Class According to Grade Levels

	Class Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Visual art lesson participation	5	69	3.74	0.79	7.07	0.00
	6	95	3.59	0.85		
	7	87	3.29	0.88		
	8	35	3.07	0.77		
	Total	286	3.47	0.86		

Table 7 shows the results of the F-test analysis regarding the anxiety levels of the participants for the visual arts lesson according to their success levels. The following findings were obtained as a result of the F comparisons made on the two dimensions of the visual arts lesson anxiety scale and the overall total score averages according to the achievement levels of the students. An F value of 0.28 in the fine arts lesson anxiety dimension; An F value of 8.91 was calculated in the process anxiety dimension and a F value of 5.32 in the mean total anxiety score. According to these F values obtained, a significant difference was found in terms of achievement level in the process anxiety and total score averages of the anxiety scale for the visual arts lesson. In the Sheffe test analysis, it was found that the students with low achievement levels had high levels of anxiety towards the visual arts lesson.

Table 7. Comparison of Secondary School Students' Anxiety Levels for Visual Arts Lesson According to Achievement Levels

	Achievement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Visual Arts Anxiety	Low	41	2.74	0.65	0.29	0.75
	Moderate	211	2.66	0.63		
	High	34	2.65	0.64		
	Total	286	2.67	0.63		
Visual Arts Process Anxiety	Low	41	2.06	1.01	8.91	0.00
	Moderate	211	1.63	0.64		
	High	34	1.43	0.48		
	Total	286	1.67	0.71		
VA Total Anxiety	Low	41	2.40	0.65	5.32	0.01
	2	211	2.14	0.50		
	3	34	2.04	0.40		
	Total	286	2.17	0.52		

Table 8 shows the results of the F-test analysis regarding the participation levels of the participants in the visual arts lesson according to their success levels. The F value of 15.86 was calculated as a result of the comparisons made on the visual arts lesson participation average score according to the success levels of the students. According to this F value obtained, a significant difference was found in terms of achievement level in the mean score of the visual arts lesson participation scale. It has been found that students with high success levels in Sheffe test analyzes have a high level of participation in the visual arts lesson.

Table 8. Comparison of Secondary School Students' Visual Arts Class Participation According to Achievement Levels

	Achievement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	p
Visual art lesson participation	Low	41	2.94	0.70	15.861	0.000
	Moderate	211	3.48	0.81		
	High	34	4.01	1.02		
	Total	286	3.47	0.86		

Regression test results performed in Table 9 showed that the level of anxiety towards visual arts lesson was a significant but negative predictor of participation in visual arts lesson ($R^2 = 19.6$; 35.64 ; $p=000<0.05$). This showed that the anxiety levels of the participant students explained 19.6% of the variance in visual arts participation. Both sub-dimensions of the visual arts anxiety scale negatively but significantly affect participation in the relevant lesson.

Table 9. The results of the regression test between the variables of anxiety towards the visual arts lesson **and** participation in the visual arts lesson

	Beta (β)	Std. Error	Std. Beta (β)	t	p
(constant)	4.984	0.209		23.833	0.000
Visual Arts Anxiety	-0.309	0.074	-0.227	-4.178	0.000
Visual Arts Process Anxiety	-0.414	0.066	-0.341	-6.269	0.000

R= 0.449; R² = 0.196; F=35.64; p<0.05

Discussion and Conclusion

The first finding reached in the study, which examined secondary school students' anxiety and participation in the visual arts lesson, was about anxiety. It was observed that the students' anxiety decreased especially during the process stage where the activities of the visual arts lesson were carried out. However, the anxiety levels of the participants towards the visual arts lesson did not differ according to their gender. According to Carey et al. (2016), lesson anxiety of students studying from primary school to high school usually manifests itself in the form of tension and stiffness against prior knowledge, lesson or performance. A person's sensitivity to artistic content and processes emerges in childhood and is shaped during secondary school years (Koelsch et al. 2003; Schellenberg, 2005; Soley & Hannon 2010). Moreover, although some emotional responses to art are universal (Egermann, Fernando, Chuen, McAdams, 2015), culture-specific artistic habits and tendencies rather than gender and personal factors may affect affective tendencies towards visual arts lessons (Gregory & Varney, 1996). Lesson anxiety is not just a psychological problem, because it is decisive in limiting students' choices about career opportunities beyond secondary school needs.

According to the findings of the study, it has been shown that teachers and parents affect lesson anxiety, and both are observed to be an important factor in alleviating the psychological and physical symptoms experienced by children. In this respect, both the quality of the visual arts lesson and the activities carried out within the scope of this lesson have a quality that reduces anxiety rather than increases it. However, in the study, it was observed that the level of anxiety towards the visual arts lesson differed according to the grade and achievement levels. According to the research findings, a significant difference was found in the process anxiety and total score averages of the anxiety scale for the visual arts lesson in terms of grade level. In the study, it was determined that the students studying in the seventh and eighth grades had high levels of anxiety. In addition, it was found that students with a high level of success had a low level of anxiety towards the visual arts lesson. Especially in Turkey, secondary school seventh and eighth grade students neglect and ignore art classes because of their exam preparation, exam anxiety and goals. On the other hand, it is possible to talk about studies supporting the findings of this thesis in the literature on this subject. Lee, Morrell and Marini (2012), in their research for the British Ministry of Education, revealed that the socio-cultural differences and pre-attitudes of young people are an effective factor in their participation in artistic activities and activities, their attitudes and performances.

Another dependent variable discussed in the study is the participation of the participating secondary school students in the visual arts lesson. It was found that the secondary school students participating in the study had a high level of participation in the visual arts lesson. However, the participation of the participants in the visual arts lesson does not differ according to their gender. According to Russell-Bowwiew (2012), arts education is a source

of fun and pleasure for many children who face the challenges of school life. Research over the years has shown that continued participation in arts programs increases the potential for both boys and girls to participate in learning by helping them feel more self-confident and develop their social, emotional and academic skills. Strikingly, the contribution of participation in the arts to the academic self of students is of particular importance to all students. When the relevant literature is examined, it has been observed that especially if the visual arts lesson is student-centered and actively taught, it has positive effects on variables such as students' attitudes, behavior, motivation and class participation (Chen, 2011; Darts, 2006).

The other finding reached in the study is about the relationship between participation in visual arts lesson, grade level and academic achievement. In the study, it was found significant that especially the last year students' participation in visual arts classes exhibited very low levels. On the other hand, students with a high level of success participate more in the visual arts lesson. Increasingly, schools in Turkey seem to undertake a function of preparing children for exams rather than preparing them for life. Values gained through education are evaluated as exam-oriented. This evaluation is also made on the basis of more cognitive features. A large part of the parents of the final year students, especially those who are preparing for the central exams, see it as an unnecessary lesson that has no contribution to the success of the exam, they do not feel the need to motivate the children about the achievements of this lesson, and they find it unnecessary to allocate resources for the materials to be used in the lesson. On the other hand, according to Burton et al. (1999), fine arts develop perceptual and cognitive skills. In a study by Burton et al. (1999) on students at different school levels, it was found that arts-based curriculum practices were far superior to traditional education in creative thinking, self-concept, problem-solving, self-expression, academic success, risk-taking, and collaboration. In this respect, it is also supported by the literature that children with high success levels provide high lesson participation (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012; Russel-Bowwie, 2012).

The last finding of the study is about the relationship between secondary school students' anxieties about the visual arts lesson and their participation in the lesson. According to the results of the regression analysis, the high anxiety about the visual arts lesson reduces the participation in this lesson. The results of studies conducted at different teaching levels and lessons have generally shown that anxiety prevents students from participating in the learning and teaching process, reducing their performance and success (Jegede, 2007; Osborne, Simon, & Collins, 2003; Udo, Ramsey, & Mallow, 2004). In particular, it can be mentioned that there is an inverse relationship between class attendance and anxiety. As students' participation in the visual arts lesson increases, their lesson anxiety decreases. In this respect, it is thought that if students gain a positive attitude towards the visual arts lesson and avoid the factors that will cause anxiety, the participation in the visual arts lesson will increase. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended to apply methods and techniques that improve the affective characteristics of students for the Visual arts lesson. Academic skills can be reinforced by increasing the participation of students in the visual arts lesson and other lessons. In future research on this subject, the effect of visual arts activities to be carried out on the basis of experimental method on student anxiety and participation can be examined.

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